


APPENDIX D

intellectual property filing system is illustrated in the context of single direction flows of filings, persons of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that, at least in some realizations, intellectual property filing portal **110** provides a fully bi-directional filing capability.

 Referring now to **FIG. 2**, a single originating filer application is illustrated executing on workstation **221**. In an illustrative configuration, the originating filer application communicates with an intellectual property filing portal **210** implemented as an information service executing on a networked information server via a communication network, preferably a public, packet-switched data network with Virtual Private Networking (VPN) support. In the illustration of **FIG. 2**, two intellectual property filings are processed. Each is transacted via the network and intellectual property filing portal **210**; however the first is filed **209A** with European Patent Office **241** and **209B** with Japanese Patent Office **253** after being transacted with information systems **231** and **234** of respective European and Japanese associates. The second is transacted without an associate intermediary and is filed **209C** directly in the United States Patent and Trademark office acting as receiving office **242** under the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

A foreign filing session is initiated (**201**) by authenticating and requesting target jurisdiction and associate information from intellectual property filing portal **210**. In response, intellectual property filing portal **210** supplies (**202**) a listing or other computer readable encoding of target jurisdictions and corresponding associates currently registered. For the sake of illustration, we assume that (as illustrated in **FIG. 1**) two associates are available for filings in the European Patent Office and a single associate is available for filings in the Japanese Patent Office. Further, we


assume that virtually all significant regional and national offices are supported with at least one corresponding associate. Given these assumptions, intellectual property filing portal **210** may supply workstation **221** with a rather extensive listing of target jurisdictions and associates for presentation to the user. Possible selections may be presented to the user using any suitable user interface technology.

In some configurations, intellectual property filing portal **210** supplies or otherwise provides access to additional information that may facilitate selection, by a user at workstation **221**, of particular associates and target jurisdictions. For example,

subsequent to the selection (204) of target jurisdictions and corresponding associates. In other configurations, at least some manual entry of data into the form documents may be required. In either case, once formal documents are finalized (either automatically or with manual intervention), the user authorizes (206) the intellectual property filings in the selected target jurisdictions using the selected associates.

Coincident with the authorization, application software executing on workstation 221 transmits (207) at least some of the filing documents to intellectual property filing portal 210. Preferably, all filing documents (including completed and digitally signed formal documents and technical documents retrieved from data store 224) are transmitted to intellectual property filing portal 210. However, in some configurations, some of the documents are printed (e.g., using printer 231), signed and transferred in hardcopy form to the corresponding associate. In situations where original signatures are required, an overnight courier may be employed. Alternatively, if consistent with the requirements of a particular target jurisdiction, signed formal papers may be faxed (233), or scanned (232) and transmitted electronically, to the corresponding associate.

Intellectual property filing portal 210 receives (207) the user's authorization (including a fee authorization) and at least some of the filing documents from workstation 221 and, in turn, forwards (208A, 208B) a respective one (or ones) of the filing documents to the appropriate associates for filing. Preferably, the forwarding is in computer readable form so that, if available in the corresponding target jurisdiction, filings can be made electronically by the corresponding associates. However, for at least some associates and presently for all patent offices, it is expected that filing documents will be transmitted in hard copy form. Intellectual property filing portal 210 maintains as part of its associate registrations a computer readable encoding of suitable transmission means.

 In a representative configuration, target- and associate-specific requirements, including form documents, formal requirements and fee schedules supplied (205) by intellectual property filing portal 210 are previously supplied (251A, 251B, 252) in computer readable form by respective associates. Alternatively, such information may be maintained by the respective associates and retrieved on demand by intellectual property filing portal 210 in response a particular user's foreign filing